

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA PERFINS

At the beginning of June 1991, PETER O'KEEFE, editor of the Seven-oaks Philatelic Society Newsletter, sent me a copy of the Spring 1991 edition. In it was a very interesting article on the G.B. stamps used by the Commonwealth of Australia from Australia House, London and perfined C of A (two types). The article was written by Mr. Eric Whitmore who, as packet superintendent and auctioneer of Sevenoaks P.S., had been given a collection of these perfins to sell in their summer auction.

It is unnecessary to publish the whole of his paper as some of the information is in Bulletin 248/8 and in the book, "G.B.OFFICIAL PERFINNS" by T.A. Edwards and B.C. Lucas. However, Mr. Whitmore's study of the collection and his enquiries at Australia House gave rise to some new facts.

1. He was informed that the perfins C/OF/A has definitely not been used since 1972.
2. He has seen a cover dated "London 10-2-1911" with the C of A perfins.
3. After comparing the 2 types of die, Mr. Whitmore puts forward the following theory on the mechanics of the perforators. The C of A was a single unit, hand operated punch. He has based this assumption on the relatively small quantities required, and the difficulty of positioning on the stamps of more than one unit which were used.

The C/OF/A was almost certainly in pairs. On the majority of large format stamps, the motif appears twice, unnecessary if only one unit was employed. Also on large format stamps, the spacing between the pairs is consistently 20 $\frac{1}{4}$ mm. and this spacing can be verified on the large blocks in the collection, although the spacing from one pair to another may vary.

The large blocks also caused Mr. Whitmore to come to the next

assumption, namely that the C/OF/A punch was foot operated. The evenness of puncture and regular positioning would be difficult to achieve by a hand punch when six or more thicknesses were being perforated.

4. An interesting variety occurred in the GV puncture, when the top pin of both "A"s disappeared for a time, to reappear later, so that all QEII examples are complete. Also for an apparently short period one of the "F"s appeared as an inverted "L".
5. The collection for auction included stamps of all appropriate reigns except KEVII, ranging from a GV McKennal 1d to QEII Wildings; values from *sd to £1. It included mint and used (but mainly mint). There were two large blocks which illustrate the 8 different 'permutations' which the perfins can assume in relation to the stamp design depending on the degree of folding of the stamps and direction of insertion into the punch. The block illustrated is on GVI 2d pale orange.
6. The whole study collection of some 6 pages, as described above, fetched £57-50 at auction.

I (Editor) am very grateful to Peter O'Keefe & Mr. Whitmore for allowing me to extract information from the Sevenoaks Newsletter.

